

Impact of 'Minor' Injuries



Worldwide, up to 50 million people experience a non-fatal injury from a road traffic crash each year, leading to long term disability in many individuals (Mackenzie et al., 2002). Evidence shows that poor physical health, pain, and poor mental health all lead to poor outcomes (Sterling & Kenardy, 2011).

A study completed by the Centre of National Research on Disability and Rehabilitation Medicine (CONROD) for the Motor Accident Insurance Commission (MAIC) identified that minor injuries resulting from road traffic crashes can result in significant long-term impacts:

- Approximately 40% of study participants were assessed as having a newly diagnosed mental health disorder during the first two years post-injury. This group had reported no prior history of mental illness.
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Major Depression, and Generalised Anxiety Disorder were most commonly diagnosed, with all three co-occurring in approximately 10% of those with diagnosed mental health disorders.

In comparison to participants without a diagnosed mental health disorder, participants with poor mental health reported:

- Significantly higher disability;
- Significantly higher pain;
- Significantly lower physical health;
- More sick leave and time off work;
- Higher use of health care services; and
- Low expectation of recovery.

Improving long-term outcomes for this group, thereby reducing pressure on the healthcare system, may be achieved through the early provision of:

- Treatment for physical and/ or mental health issues;
- Information regarding potential impacts of minor injuries and recovery;
- Pain management strategies; and
- Increased social supports.